



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

Safe Kids Kansas reminds parents: bike helmets save brains and lives

Properly fitted bike helmets could reduce the risk of bike-related brain injuries by 88 percent; however, only one out of five cyclists ages 5 to 14 usually wears a helmet. On average, 168 Kansas children ages 0-14 die or are injured as a result of a bicycle crash in traffic each year. Head injury is the leading cause of death in bicycle crashes and traumatic brain injuries occur in 45% of those hospitalized for bicycle crashes.

“A bike helmet is essential safety gear,” says Jan Stegelman, Safe Kids Kansas coordinator. “Helmets could prevent an estimated 75 percent of bike-related fatalities.

A helmet should be labeled to indicate that it is certified by a reputable standards and testing organization — ANSI, Snell or ASTM International. As long as it’s certified and brand new, Stegelman says, “Let kids pick out their own helmets. If they think a helmet looks cool, they’ll be more likely to wear it when you’re not around.”

Safe Kids Kansas also reminds parents and caregivers:

- **Make sure the helmet fits and your kids know how to put it on correctly.** In a crash, the risk of head injury is doubled if the helmet is worn incorrectly. A helmet should sit on top of the head in a level position, and should not rock forward and backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled but not too tightly. Safe Kids recommends the “Eyes, Ears and Mouth” test: The rim of the helmet should be one to two finger-widths above the eyebrows, the straps should form a “V” just below the ear lobe, the buckle should be flat against the skin and the strap should feel snug when the rider’s mouth is open.
- **Remember bike helmets are for riding bikes** and other human-powered wheels. Kids should *not* wear bike helmets on the playground (where the straps can get caught on equipment and cause injury) or for activities that require specialized helmets (such as skiing or football). Bike helmets *are* appropriate for roller skating, inline skating and skateboarding without aerial stunts, and for use with nonmotorized scooters. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons recommends that children under 12 wear a bike helmet while sledding.

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Brain Injury Awareness Month/2022

Safe Kids Kansas provides reduced price bicycle helmets and Bike Rodeo resources for community programs in the state through its CYCLE SMART program. Since the program's inception more than 88,000 helmets have been distributed. The program has been credited with 10 lives saved. If your community group would like to provide helmets as part of a bike safety program, please contact Safe Kids Kansas at 785-296-0351. For more information on bike helmets visit www.usa.safekids.org.

Brain Injury Awareness Month is observed annually by the Brain Injury Association of America, www.biausa.org, which reports there are at least 5.3 million Americans living with long-term disabilities due to traumatic brain injury according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Safe Kids Kansas, Inc. is a nonprofit Coalition of 67 statewide organizations and businesses dedicated to preventing accidental injuries to Kansas children ages 0-14. Local coalitions and chapters are located in Allen, Anderson, Atchison, Clay, Dickinson, Doniphan, Douglas, Ellis, Ford, Franklin, Geary, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Marion, Meade, Mitchell, Montgomery, Nemaha, Osage, Pottawatomie, Republic, Rice, Riley, Saline, Smith, Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Wilson and Woodson Counties, as well as the cities of Chanute, Emporia, Leavenworth, Norton, Pittsburg, the Wichita Area and the Metro Kansas City Area. Safe Kids Kansas a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations whose mission is to prevent accidental childhood injury.

www.kansassafekids.org

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